

Z&P #1

**Excerpt from the
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Minneapolis Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)**

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 7, 2015

TO: Zoning and Planning Committee

FROM: Jason Wittenberg, Manager, Community Planning & Economic Development – Land Use, Design and Preservation

SUBJECT: Planning Commission decisions of April 13, 2015

The following actions were taken by the Planning Commission on April 13, 2015. As you know, the Planning Commission's decisions on items other than rezonings, text amendments, vacations, 40 Acre studies and comprehensive plan amendments are final subject to a ten calendar day appeal period before permits can be issued.

Committee Clerk

Lisa Kusz - 612.673.3710

Commissioners present

Matthew Brown, President | John Slack, Vice President | Alissa Luepke Pier, Secretary
Lisa Bender | Ben Gisselman | Theodore Tucker

Not present

Meg Forney | Rebecca Gagnon | Ryan Kronzer

**8. Depot Renaissance Expansion, 300 Washington Ave S (225 3rd Ave S), Ward 3
Staff report by Becca Farrar, BZZ-7082**

The City Planning Commission adopted staff findings for the application by CSM Corporation.

A. Site Plan Review to construct building additions.

Action: **Approved** the application for a single-story addition (6th floor) on top of the existing Depot Renaissance Hotel as well as to allow for an infill addition which results in additional guest rooms, a fitness center, a concierge lounge and pool, subject to the following conditions:

1. All site improvements shall be completed by April 13, 2017, unless extended by the Zoning Administrator, or the permit may be revoked for noncompliance.
2. Approval of the final site, elevation, and landscaping plans by CPED.

Not Approved by the Commission

3. The site plan shall be modified to reflect the following modifications along 5th Ave S: reduce the northerly curb cut width from 19 feet to 16 feet; reduce the southerly curb cut width from 45 feet to 20 feet all while elevating the public sidewalk in this location so that it ties into and flows at one continuous grade along the street.
4. The proposal shall meet all applicable requirements and conditions as approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission per BZH-28550.
5. No alterations or modifications are approved to the Milwaukee Road Depot building or Freight House.

Aye: Bender, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier, Slack and Tucker

Absent: Forney, Gagnon and Kronzer

Staff Farrar presented the staff report.

President Brown opened the public hearing.

John Ferrier with CSM Corporation: I would like to talk about condition number three, which is the reduction of the curb cut. CSM worked with Public Works and Planning staff to make this a more pedestrian friendly connection. We're planning to revise the driveway so the pedestrian path is now level instead of going up a curb ramp going down and going up again. We're leveling that out by increasing the slope of the driveway and we're also providing a colored concrete pedestrian walk to identify the pedestrian travel. The reduction to 16 feet on the right turn only is acceptable to CSM, but the 20 foot reduction is not acceptable. We believe this would have negative effects on our business. This development encompasses two full city blocks and within that space we have two hotels, a banquet center, an event center, a restaurant and a skating rink and all of these functions require parking and people to come and go freely. In addition, this is our only point of access for our vehicular traffic. We don't have a loading dock on site, we don't have a roll up door where we take trash out, this is where all services are provided at the site. On a daily basis, that building experiences 389 contract parkers, 230 transient parkers, 88 employees and 84 hotel guests. In addition, we have events almost every day of the year ranging from 10 people to 1500 people. On a daily basis we have lunch and breakfast meetings and events. There is a lot of coming and going. We have eight trash and recycling pickups a week. We have semis that unload trucks. The right turn only is very important to us because that's where our semis access the site and that's the only way our semis can back into the shed to deliver for events. We really need to retain that right turn only. As part of my analysis, I took a look at some of the other ramps in the downtown area and I provided a breakdown. We are the only ramp that has one means of access for vehicles. The other ramps downtown either have a loading dock or separate areas for trash, but for us it's all through one point. One analysis I did was I took the number of parking spaces and the amount of feet per parking space of exiting each ramp provides. Currently, we are towards the bottom of that list as far as providing egress width for the amount of parkers we have. If that entry was made to be 20 feet, it would limit us greatly. We'd only have one in and one out during events on that lane and that would cause backups. We experience backups during rush hour and during events. It just isn't a workable solution for us to reduce that to 20 feet. We are asking that the reduction only be to 35 feet. We believe we can still operate and provide two lanes in and one lane out during ingress and two lanes out and one lane in during egress for events. Thank you.

Commissioner Tucker: Why do you have to have such a large radius on your right hand turn coming south?

John Ferrier: That was to accommodate trucks.

Commissioner Tucker: Is there any way to accommodate that? I ask because those high radius turn ins are unfriendly to pedestrians. It gives the automobiles coming the sense that they have the right of way even if there are stop signs and calming devices. If that could be reduced, I think it'd be a more pedestrian friendly solution.

John Ferrier: When this was originally designed, this is the way it was designed and it was for truck traffic so we could get trucks to pull up on 5th and then back in. The entry for trucks for the Depot is on the far east end so we can't take a truck and make a left turn into that, we have to access it by using that right in only.

Commissioner Tucker: Can a truck come in that way with a 16' driveway?

John Ferrier: Yes.

Commissioner Slack: The graphic that shows the truck turning movements is showing truck turns coming into the Depot as a forward movement and not a backward movement.

John Ferrier: Right, they come in both ways. Usually they back in. They pull up on 5th and then back in to that right in only lane. There is an occasion where they come in the front way too. The radii would be the same.

Commissioner Slack: Would you consider the potential design change that was mentioned from Public Works regarding removal of that right in and just expand the one curb cut?

John Ferrier: The removal of the right in will really impede our truck deliveries.

Commissioner Slack: To just the Depot or the whole complex?

John Ferrier: The whole complex. That's where the semis come in.

Commissioner Slack: Have you looked at the opportunity to maybe design surmountable sidewalks or anything like that? This was something we talked about at CoW. Increasing the number of rooms, you're going to exacerbate some of the issues that you have currently. We're just looking for a way to improve the public realm while still allowing as much movement for automobiles as possible.

John Ferrier: It's our wish to improve that intersection for pedestrian traffic as well, but we can't impede the operations of our very successful event center. We did consider what Public Works has recommended as far as doing away with the right in only and providing 30', but we don't see that as a viable option because of our truck delivery. We looked at having the curbs where you can drive over them, but to me that isn't that pedestrian friendly. I would rather do something where we have enough room for the truck to make the movement without driving over a place for pedestrians.

Commissioner Luepke-Pier: I was looking at the sheet that shows the truck movement and I was wondering if there's a reason why the southernmost curb cut is so large. It seems the trucks move quite a distance, maybe eight or nine feet, beyond that. Is there a reason why that one can't be tightened up a little bit?

John Ferrier: That's the curb cut that we're proposing to go from the current width of 45' to the new width of 35'. The southern side of it would be the part of it that would bump out.

Commissioner Bender: When Public Works recommended this alternative option, weren't they aware of the truck movement needs of the site? They're usually pretty keen to like safety and vehicle types.

John Ferrier: I'm not 100% sure if they know our operations of the hotel and where those trucks actually go, but they did have the exhibit showing those turning radii.

President Brown closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Tucker: I move staff recommendation (Gisselman seconded).

Aye: Bender, Gisselman, Luepke-Pier, Slack and Tucker

Absent: Forney, Gagnon and Kronzer